

(Mount Clipping in Space Below)

Editorials

Elements of Blame

THE PRESS and the police must share the blame for the shooting of Lee Oswald. And in saying this, The Times Herald recognizes the fact that its reporters and photographers were present, eager to cover the event of the moving of the accused assassin of President Kennedy.

The press has certain privileges because it represents the eyes and ears of everyone. Sometimes it should be allowed where others are shut out. But it must recognize those times when press freedom endangers a greater public responsibility. Such an occasion as the movement of the President's assassin

was one of those times when police officials would have been justified in excluding the press or any other non-officially connected person, complaints notwithstanding. It could well have been accomplished, even had the press been present, with secrecy or with a pool arrangement or through some other means which restricted the number of those on the scene.

Here we sympathize with the intentions of Dallas police chief Jesse Curry. Chief Curry is rapidly becoming the national scapegoat for the miscalculation which allowed the killing of Oswald to happen. (Note the New York Times editorial reproduced on this page.)

Chief Curry has been a good chief for the Dallas Police Department, a dedicated, able career man. He is still a good chief. His actions Sunday were almost certainly motivated by the best of intentions. He has shown the greatest consideration for the press in his previous years, he was attempting to accommodate the press in announcing the time of Oswald's transfer. This time his consideration reached a tragic extreme.

Of course there is also the thought that the members of the police force guarding Oswald were themselves at fault in overlooking the possibility of

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disaster in the person of Jack Ruby. Ruby was well known to most Dallas policemen in the station, he had been a frequenter of the station for years and he was much in evidence from the time Oswald was arrested and taken there to jail. If he was present also at the transfer of Oswald and was allowed, or tolerated, without any official reason except prior recognition and a feeling that "we know him," then the blame is heavy upon those officers.

These are elements of blame which both the press and the police must recognize and, in the future, take into consideration.

The lesson came hard.